

The History of Computing for Learning and Education Project

Mission: To preserve and interpret documents, artifacts and stories relating to the history of computing in learning and education; to make them accessible and usable by educational and computer leaders, historians, practitioners and the public.

We have a BIG project in hand. Education transformed between 1970 and 1990. Computers entered classrooms and our lives. What had to be learned, and how it was learned, changed for the educators and the students of all ages.

Brick and mortar museums are doing an excellent job of preserving computer hardware; but the related papers, software and the oral histories are rapidly disappearing.

Unless the artifacts and studies are preserved and published in digital format, subsequent generations will lose two or three decades of seminal research from a critical time.

About the Virtual Museum. The HCLE Virtual Museum will encompass a publicly accessible database of over ten thousand documents for researchers. Casual visitors will use a simplified interface of virtual exhibits. Historic software, including games, will be operate in an emulation environment.

About the Traveling Exhibit. We will recreate a typical school computer laboratory from somewhere around 1980 that will access the HCLE Virtual Museum and its software emulators, allowing visitors to experience this critical time in our society's development.

About Oral History Project. The Oral History Project will capture stories from the era that may only exist as memories. Through interviews and submissions those stories will be collected in words, images, audio, and video. Social media will provide a rich source of content.

What We Have

Thousands of documents are available. Manual scanning of the documents has begun. Limited office and storage space is available. Volunteers and occasional contract work help the work progress.

What We Need

We need to automate the scanning process, and hire sufficient staff to coordinate the volunteers, curate the collection, design and operate the Virtual Museum and the Traveling Exhibit, and reach out to researchers and the public.

This effort is estimated to require about \$250,000 per quarter, 90% of which is labor for expediting the various projects. Initial funding will be directed to a proof-of-concept to demonstrate and test the development strategy.

How Long It Will Take

A concurrent effort could complete the bulk of the work within two and a half years.

HCLE Executive Summary

Conclusion

This is a critical time for preserving an important moment in the development of human civilization.

Please let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to working in partnership on this exciting online history project.